



Literacy Policy

Scope of Policy

The Literacy policy applies to the whole school and encompasses all students, teachers, departments, parents, subjects, classwork, homework and home study.

Mission

In our mission statement we aim to provide a teaching and learning community committed to quality and excellence in education by

- Promoting personal achievement and academic success.
- Respecting the unique potential of every student and encouraging each to maximise it.

This policy sets out to ensure that Literacy is not a block towards our students achieving their best selves. Literacy is a key tool in the teaching and learning process. This tool should increase student motivation, engagement, learning, enjoyment and autonomy.

Rationale

1. Ireland's poor performance at PISA 2009 Test (reading standards declining since 2000, students reading less and the gender gap in reading literacy is widening)
2. Education System outdated – based on nineteenth century model not adapted to create skills required for twenty first century (critical thinking, problem solving, information literacy, effective oral communicators, creative thinkers, self management, staying well, managing information)

National Targets for Post-Primary Schools:

1. To have world class Literacy Standards



2. To improve our attitudes to Literacy: to raise an awareness of the importance of oral and written language in all its forms (including digital), to foster an enjoyment of reading.
3. To increase the percentage of 15 year olds performing at or above level 4 and level 5 in PISA

Implementing the National Literacy Strategy at Stratford College

We needed to reflect on our current literacy and to plan for future literacy development. Literacy underpins Stratford College's curriculum by developing students' abilities to speak, listen, read and write for a wide range of purposes, using language to learn and communicate, to think, explore and organise. Helping students to express themselves orally and in writing enhances and enriches teaching and learning in all subjects. All departments and all teachers have a responsibility and crucial role to play in supporting student's literacy development.

Teacher training will be provided on an on-going basis. Literacy has been designated as a key focus for our SSE and SIP. All teachers will incorporate literacy into their year plans. Teachers, students and parents will be consulted via questionnaires. Standardised testing will be introduced for first and second year students. Research will commence regarding methods of bench marking literacy standards and target setting.

Objectives of this policy

- To explain Literacy comprehensively as a key part of teaching and learning
- To outline effective Literacy tools
- To establish a dialogue amongst staff members with a view to a shared approach to teaching Literacy.



- To regularly monitor and evaluate techniques used
- To set targets for improving literacy in our School Improvement Plan
- To extend the Standardised Assessment of English Reading by assessing the performance of students at the end of second year (GRIT test administered by Delia Donohue in November to compare to attainment in June)
- To include the ability to read digital material as a part of the National Assessment of English reading
- To improve on the way in which we access and report on students' progress in literacy

Policy content

Definition of terms

Oral Literacy

Stratford College has always strived to ensure that all its students are developing each aspect of their literacy. Oral attainment is stimulated through their participation in Junior and Senior L & H Debating Competitions, in house debating, preparation for Poetry Aloud Competition, first and fourth year compulsory Leinster School of Music and Drama Exams, producing a film, the provision of a school musical, European Youth Parliament, their performance at Stratford's Got Talent, holding A Morning of Music and Readings, students' presentations during class from the class podium, students' presentations at school assemblies, students hosting events and acting as master of ceremonies at school events.

Written Literacy

Mastery at written expression is encouraged through the varied and frequent homework and class assignments, posting the best of their written work on the English blog and publishing it on mylocalnews.ie, their top reviews, essays etc are



displayed on the English notice board, the production of a school magazine, the competition for the Senior and Junior Elaine Feldman Annual Literary Prize, competing for a place in the Annual Morning of Music and Readings, the submission of their poems to the SLSS Poetry Competition, their newspaper articles to the Press Pass Initiative, their short stories to the Hennessy XO competition and their plays to the Trinity Playwrights' competition, writing screen plays for their film production. Visiting writers, poets, film makers, and playwrights visit the school to discuss their art form and to encourage the students to emulate them.

Reading Literacy

Their love of reading is cultivated through creating a positive reading culture. We have a full time librarian who is extremely active at promoting reading across all subjects. Ms O'Kelly makes excellent use of her notice boards and expertly manages the website to promote literature or to highlight cross curricular thematic work. Furthermore, she organises library competitions, invites speakers, and teaches how to write bibliographies and she runs a very successful book club. Also, there's an English library located in the English room to offer students a selection of Ms Reynolds' favourite books across all genres. There is also a substantial reference section that the students are encouraged to peruse at their leisure.

Books are explicitly discussed amongst staff and students, a summer reading list is provided for each year, each class group has three compulsory novels per year assessed by review. There is also a catalogued book in the English library, a reading tree is hung in the hall to display the books the students read over the summer. Yearly, we participate in the MS Readathon, and World Poetry Day. Biannually, we hold our own Arts Week, which promotes all aspects of literacy. World Book Day is also celebrated through fundraising, holding a book swap and by inviting Rathgar Book Shop in to the school. Excellence in spelling is encouraged through the end of



term Spelling Bee and testing throughout the year. Literary tours to coincide with One City, One Book and school trips.

Digital Literacy

As a staff we strive to ensure that our students have many opportunities to use ICT in order to create, access, manage and share knowledge. Students are encouraged to research their writing assignments on authoritative websites, to type their written assignments, to use Power Point to present their project to their class, to publish their magazines or advertisements on Publisher, to create news broadcasts on Creaza, to edit films, to evaluate the data retrieved, Frequently students use the internet to research topics and ascertain the facts on a particular topic.

Teaching and Learning and Literacy

1. Every teacher in English is a teacher of English

We need to think of ourselves as Teachers of literacy, group work, creativity, as well as being teachers of English/History/Geography etc

- Creating a reading culture: Create a classroom library; consisting of specialist magazines, reference texts, and relevant articles. Recommend extra support texts for your subject for the school library. This list could be used for students in the Library Reading Programme to guide their interest in your subject e.g. Science – Bill Bryson's 'A Short History of Nearly Everything'. Business – the Steve Job biography, English – a list of Dystopian/Utopian novels
- Check the reading age of your textbook (see handout provided in December)
- Include Literacy in your whole school plan.



- Set Targets re key words to develop their vocabulary (specific terminology for your subject – see handout worksheet for key words)
 - aim for 20 key words
 - Teach them explicitly – devise interesting ways to ensure these terms are understood and remembered. Your students could create a vocabulary list at the back of their copy, put key words on walls with visual images to reinforce concept. (literacy sheets in journal from next year)
 - It can take anything from 6 – 18 times to remember a word and actively use it.
 - Teach word decoding skills – break a new word up into syllables, count the syllables, highlight where the emphasis is. Generally if a student knows how to pronounce a word they will spell it correctly.
 - Teach reading comprehension:
 - The explicit development of higher order skills and strategies for reading comprehension e.g. retrieving information, questioning, inferring, synthesizing, critically evaluating a text.
 - Model how to read a text. We are expert readers; while we are deciphering text we need to speak out loud the reading skills at work.
- Providing pathways into individual texts:
 - teach with skimming/scanning exercise in mind.
 - Ask students to create a heading for a paragraph
- Create a talking classroom – creative opportunities for demonstrating comprehension of texts. Write a diary entry on a geologist's discovery of a cave
- Ask students to convert the text into different displays: flow charts, columns, mind maps, linear charts (see handouts)
- Create a list of your top ten books – display it!
- Promote DEAR, Ms Readathon, book swap, World Book Day
- Modify your approach to the teaching of writing



How to Embed Literacy in Each Subject:

- Include Literacy in your whole school plan.
- Set Targets re key words (specific terminology for your subject):
aim for 20 key words
- Teach them explicitly – devise interesting ways to ensure these terms are understood and remembered. Your students could create a vocabulary list at the back of their copy, put key words on walls with visual images to reinforce concept.
- Teach reading comprehension:
- The explicit development of higher order skills and strategies for reading comprehension e.g. retrieving information, questioning, inferring, synthesizing, critically evaluating a text.
- Recommend extra support texts for your subject.
- This list could be used for students in the Library Reading Programme to guide their interest in your subject e.g. Science – Bill Bryson's 'A Short History of Nearly Everything'. Business – the Steve Job biography, English – a list of Dystopian/Utopian novels.
- Creating digitally literate students – who ask questions of the searching parameters, authority of website, to ensure our students know how to create, access, manage and share knowledge. See appendix 1 (this handout was distributed to staff in November. It contains a modified version of Fiona Richardson's handbook)

2. Modify our assessment by ..

Implementing AFL strategies

3. Learning Support:

To withdraw students with a STEN score of 3 or less twice a week to work on a targeted intervention programme such as 'Catch Up'.



Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

- To ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated from time to time
- To approve the policy
- To consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy

Principal, Deputy Principal and Class Tutors

- To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy
- To monitor the implementation of the policy

Subject Teachers

- To implement the policy by following the points in the guidelines
- To monitor progress of Literacy at Subject Department meetings
- To use the resources and the tool-kit available to staff at in-services and during the year

Pastoral Care Personnel (Class tutors, Guidance and Resource Personnel)

- To liaise with subject teachers especially in relation to students with special educational needs

Parents are encouraged

- To understand the multifaceted approach to literacy
- To oversee that advice and guidelines given on school reports are followed
- Encourage your children to talk about their interests and activities, and about what they are reading
- Encourage your children to read newspapers and talk about what they read
- Bring your children to the local library
- Encourage your children to write e.g. blogging, post reviews, keep a diary

Students are required

- To engage fully with the different types of literacy



- To use Feedback given by subject teachers as a tool for advancement

Success Criteria

- Literacy awareness is embedded in all our teaching and learning
- A positive literacy culture in the school
- To regularly monitor and evaluate techniques used
- Meeting targets set for improving literacy in our School Improvement Plan
- To make improvements in their Standardised Assessments of English Reading
- Students are able to read digital material as a part of the National Assessment of English reading
- Improvements on the way in which we access and report on students' progress in literacy
- Parents, students and teachers are satisfied with the effectiveness of this policy
- The goals are being attained

Monitoring Procedures

- Class tutors will conduct on-going monitoring through informal discussion with students and will note feedback from students, teachers and parents.
- Subject Departments will review implementation twice yearly at designated meetings.
- Principal will include Literacy on staff meeting agenda twice yearly.
- The committee will oversee that the inclusion of Literacy principles are evident on school reports. On-going surveys of staff, parents and students to ensure satisfaction

Review Procedures

The policy will be reviewed after two years. The review team will comprise the Principal, Deputy Principal and the Literacy committee.

- Views and experiences of teachers, students and parents will be surveyed in relation to the policy.
- School reports will be analysed to assess impact of the Literacy policy on students' academic progress and teachers' comments.
- The progress of students with special educational needs will be given particular attention.



Appendix 1

Library Annual Report May 2013

Librarian: Helen O'Kelly (hokelly@stratfordcollege.ie)

Stratford College Library Vision

As a professionally qualified Librarian (qualified from UCD), with a MSc in Information Technology (DCU) and over 15 years work experience in software companies, my overarching vision for Stratford College Library is to make it a 21st Century School Library. In essence this means having a Library that prepares students for 3rd Level Academic Libraries and for life-long learning, supporting teachers with multi-media information resources for their classroom and providing parents with online resources through the Library website. To do this involves:

- Promoting the enjoyment of reading
- Computerising the Library, i.e. Utilising a Library Management System
- Implementing an Information Literacy Programme
- Maintaining the Library website with multi-media online resources for 24/7 access
- Providing resources in the Library in different digital and paper formats
- Providing support to students, staff and parents with their different information needs.

See also <http://www.stratfordcollege.ie/blog/post/effective-school-libraries-evidence-of-impact-on-student-achievement/> on the Library blog, posted on 27 January 2011.

Partnership with Dublin City Libraries

Stratford Library works closely with Terenure Public library. Every three months, starting in the September of each year, the Library gets a block loan of 50 books from any of the Dublin City Libraries via Terenure Library. It has enabled the Library to get books for 6th Year History students for their history projects and to keep a continual flow of new books into the Library.

Terenure Public Library has also donated approximately 50 books, including audio-books, that they've withdrawn to Stratford College and to Stratford National School. They were gratefully received.

Rathmines Public Library provides us with multiple copies of books for our Book Club. Every four weeks, starting in September there is a new Book of the Month.



School Websites

The Library has the privilege to maintain the school website – www.stratfordcollege.ie. I work very closely with the teaching staff and management to ensure that the content of the website is always fresh and reflects all of the many activities of the school.

In addition the Library also updates the website for Stratford National School (www.stratfordns.ie), adding pupils' work and photographs to it on a weekly basis.

Library Website

The Library has its own website, hosted for free on Netvibes (www.netvibes.com/stratfordcollegelibrary). There is a link to it from the homepage of the Stratford College website. It prepares students for studying at 3rd level with the Library on their desktop. It was made in collaboration with the teaching staff. It is a Web 2.0 website in that it harnesses the multi-media interactivity of the web and it essentially maintains itself. There is a tab for the Parents Association and I welcome contributions from parents.

World Book Day

Thursday, 7th March was World Book Day. It was celebrated in a variety of ways in Stratford College and National School. The highlight of the day was the launch of "Stratford College Writes" by author, Brian Conaghan. This self-published book included subject work from every student in the College. There was also the Bring a Book, Buy a Book sale, form-time puzzles, puzzles in the Library and a photo puzzle around the school. Sarah Webb, was due to visit the 1st and 2nd Year English class, through the Writers-in-School scheme on the next day, but this visit was postponed to April because of sickness.

Library Prefects

This is a new initiative for 2013-2014. Three students from Transition Year will be selected at the end of their 3rd year (students must apply for the position) to help in the Library. Library prefects will the Librarian to run the library – issuing/returning books, creating displays, administering surveys, helping students find resources, opening the Library at lunchtimes and going to the National School to help out with Library time. This work will be considered as part of their Community Work for the An Gaisce award.

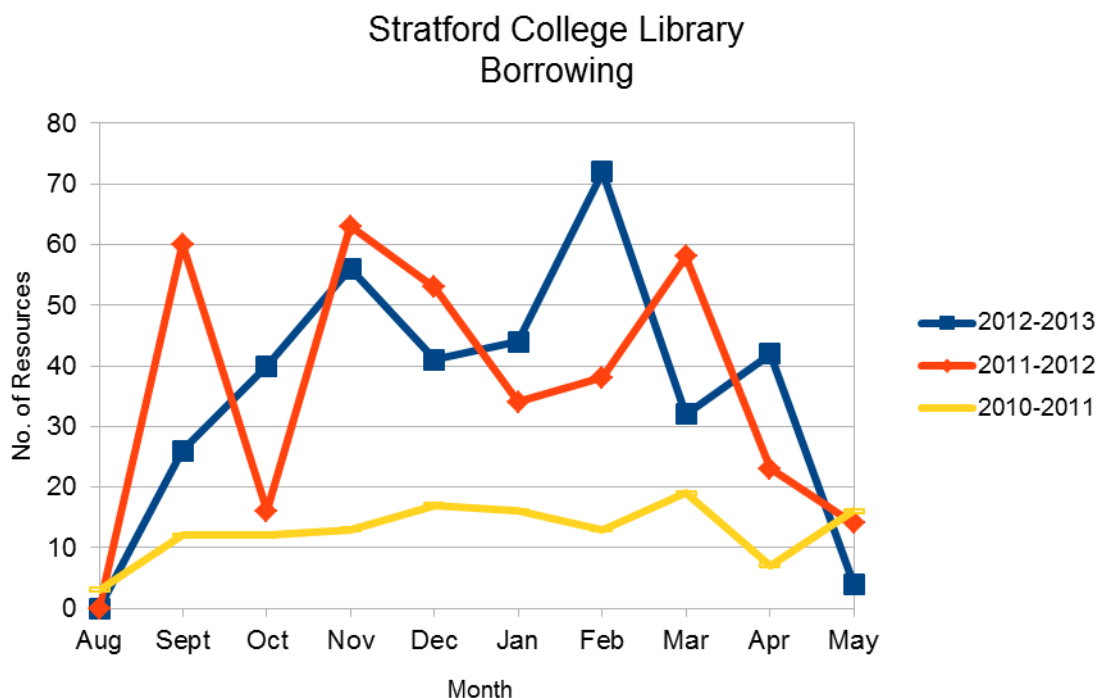
Library Borrowing 2010-2013

Since my arrival in Stratford in August 2010, I have kept borrowing records. Year on year, there have been significant improvements in borrowing of books by students (and teachers) alike. Key factors, include the Inter-Library loans initiative, publicising new books in the library on display boards and on the Library blog, taking requests for books from students (and getting them) and the Book Club.



In January 2012, about 400 books were withdrawn from circulation (they were very out-of-date or well-worn). Book donations from Terenure Library (220) and from the Church of Ireland College of Education Library (70), as well as strategic budget spends, have helped replenish our fiction and non-fiction sections. This refreshment of stock is also an important factor in the perception of the Library.

The following chart illustrates the increase in borrowing from the library in the last three years.



Library Reading Programme

In November 2012, a new initiative – the Library Reading Programme – was started. This targets all students who have four or more free classes, per week, in the Library. 7 Junior students (1st – 4th Year) and 26 Senior students (5th/6th Year) are included in this programme. Essentially, every time each student spends a class in the Library, their first focus is to do study and second it is to read. They are given a Reading Programme form to complete. I also add comments to their school reports about how they use the Library. This programme certainly focussed most students' minds, but not all. The form is going to be revamped significantly for next year, so that each student reports back on what they do each class – at present they only have to fill it in if they did read.



One important aspect of the Library Reading Programme, statistics which are not captured in the Borrowing Statistics chart, is the amount of reading that is done of magazines (Kiss, Empire and National Geographic), the Irish Times, websites and books picked off the shelf for the duration of the class.

Library Information Literacy Classes

Information Literacy is a very important aspect of the Library. Information Literacy is a term that has many definitions, but essentially it is learning how to find trustworthy information, effectively. On the Library website

(http://www.netvibes.com/stratfordcollegelibrary#Information_Literacy) there are some superb resources which explain how to research, find trustworthy information, plagiarism and citing/referencing.

In April, I ran short Information Literacy Classes as follows:

1. 6th Year Guidance class (how to use Libraries at 3rd Level Institutions)
2. 5th Year History Class (Plagiarism, citing and referencing)
3. TY History Class (Plagiarism, citing and referencing)
4. 1st Year English class, which included a Scavenger Hunt in the Library and how to find trustworthy information)

Library Book Club

The Book Club is open to all students. In general it tends to be Junior students who read the books. Books are chosen by the Librarian and are a mix of fiction, non-fiction and graphic novels. The “hits” this year were Wonder by R.J. Palacio, Steve Jobs by Karen Blumenthal and At War with the Empire by Gerry Hunt (a graphic novel).

The books selected were:

September:	Wonder by R.J. Palacio
October:	The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaimon
November:	The Girls by Lori Lansens
December:	Steve Jobs by Karen Blumenthal
January:	At War with the Empire by Gerry Hunt
February:	My Brother Simpe by Marie-Aude Murail
March:	How to Save a Life by Sara Zarr

Publicising the Library: Notice boards and the Library Blog

Publicising the Library is an important part to ensuring that it becomes embedded in the lives of students. There is a Library Notice board outside the Library and a large one in the Hall. These are regularly changed and reflect what is happening in the Library – MS-Readathon,



D.E.A. R. time, new books, World Book Day, Summer Reading, film posters, daily copy of the Irish Times, reading/writing events, book club posters.

Stratford National School

I spend every Friday afternoon doing Library time with all classes in Stratford National School. Typically during the winter term we focus on MS-Readathon, paired reading, pupils telling their class what they're reading and borrowing books. During the second term the focus is continued with the highlight being World Book Day. During the third term, I spend time teaching them information literacy, e.g. how a library is organised, etc.



Appendix 2

Helpful Websites to help teach subject specific literacy: English

Podcasting

Get students to interview staff/students re their favourite reads and the school's reading in the style of a radio programme

Movie of our school reading

Create a montage film of video clips interviewing students re their favourite reads.

Score a student's pronunciation

English central has clips from news shows and movies and shows the texts as the words are spoken. Users are then prompted to repeat the words that are shown and the student is scored on their pronunciation.
<http://www.englishcentral.com/en/videos>

Creative writing

One word offers a one word prompt and gives the students 60 seconds to start writing.
<http://oneword.com>

Maths

Khan Academy offers more than 1800 maths and science tutorial videos on line.
<http://www.khanacademy.org>. It can also be accessed through iTunes U.

Art

Create a display based on books, poems that inspire using images, lyrics or film stills. Eg 'Heart of Darkness' was the inspiration for 'Apocalypse Now'

Classics/English/Irish/French



Creaza is a set of web-based creativity tools. There are four tools that will help your students to organize knowledge and tell stories in creative ways.

1. Mindomo is the mind mapping tool
2. Cartoonist used to create comic strips. Viewed on line or printed out.
3. Movie Editor to create a short film, create a newscast, an advert, a film trailer. Import film clips or use their thematic universes
4. Audio Editor create newscasts, radio ad, programme.
5. <http://creasza.com>

Create an online comic. Click on attributes of a character, pick the colours, the background and add dialogue. It can be used to illustrate a scene or create a new scene. <http://bitstrips.com>

Chemistry

Chemical Education Digital Library is a large collection of resources for teaching and learning chemistry. It contains tutorial for students, 3D models, lesson plans. <http://www.chemeddl.org>

History

Capzles is a site that allows user to create multimedia timeline presentations. Students can upload images, video files, music files to create a slick looking historical timeline. <http://capzles.com>

Docs Teach

It helps makes History come to life. Each of the activity creation tools help students to develop historical thinking skills. <http://docsteach.org>

Business

Bized has lesson plans, glossary of business terms, slide shows and virtual field trips available for lessons on economics. <http://www.bized.co.uk/educators/intex.htm>

Jewish Studies



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Class Library

Develop a reading area in your class of reference texts, relevant newspaper articles, specialist magazines, trade books, recommended websites, blogs, video clips etc.

Wow wall

Illustrate, decorate and define the word.

Educational Videos

Neo K12 is a collection of educational videos, lessons, and games. It has catalogued the best free education videos.

<http://neok12.com>

Fotobabble

Students can create and share talking photos to help learn their definitions. Upload picture, record your voice. Students can take creative pictures or download a photo, record their voice reciting the word in a sentence or as definition. Or to record observations, lessons on a **field trip**.

<http://fotobabble.com>

Glogster

On line poster to display info in history, maths, science, book reviews. Text, pictures, video, music, can all be combined to create an interactive online poster.

Free 'Photoshop'...



Sumo paint is a free, downloadable web based programme.

www.sumopaint.com/app

Digital Portfolio

Catherine is working on developing a facility for Stratford Moodle, In the interim Weebly for Education can be accessed.

<http://education.weebly.com>

Paper rater

Checks to identify plagiarism and makes suggestions for improvement.

<http://paperrater.com>



Appendix 3

Implementing the National Literacy Strategy at Stratford College

Staff Training

- In-service for Principal 2010, 2011, 2012 (JMB, NAPD, PDST, NSPI)
- In-service for Deputy Principal 2011, 2012 (JMB, NAPD, PDST)
- Staff In-service August 2011 Catherine Moynihan PDST
- Appointment of link staff (Delia Donohoe - Literacy; Lynne McGuckin - Numeracy)
- Delia Donohue attended PDST Literacy In-service November 2011
- Siobhan Reynolds attended PDST English Literacy In-service March 2012
- Staff In-service August 2012 (handout of presentation from Deirdre Matthews DES Inspectorate)
- Literacy Staff In-service to support Literacy Resources by Fiona Richardson (NBSS)
- Inclusion in Principal's Report to School Manager & BOM, Trustees Report, Annual School Report
- Introduction of SSE to staff by DES Inspectorate November 2012
- Implementation of Literacy Focus
- Link Training for Literacy and Numeracy December 2012
- AFL and Literacy in-service PDST January 2013

Actions taken to date

- Literacy designated for 2012 under SSE (School Self Evaluation)
- Staff surveyed re Literacy and Numeracy Priorities February 2012
- Review of current literacy practice
- Assessment for learning (AFL) is now a key aspect of all our teaching e.g. student profiles, Redesign of Progress Reports (AFL) and new teaching methodologies



- Subject Based Classrooms - print rich environment with posters, key words etc
- Creating and implementing Action Plans
- Subject Planning Templates edited to incorporate literacy and numeracy, key skills and 24 statements of learning,
- Administering questionnaires to parents, staff and students
- Review of dissemination of information (T-drive, notice board, folder in filing cabinet)
- Compiling National Standardised Test results of incoming first years
- Introduction of a Reading Programme in the Library
- Researching of methods of benchmarking literacy standards and target setting
- GRIT Reading test (extending standardised assessment) was administered to our first and second year students in order to assess their improvement in June.
- Written literacy the focus for 2014 as identified in Literacy survey.
- Library Report has identified an increase in library usage.

What do we have to do?

- Literacy Committee to survey staff, students and parents re literacy and one other T & L area
- Literacy Strategy: set learning outcome targets by April for May 2012 (SSE report) Three measureable targets to improve by 10%
- School Improvement Plan due in June for September 2013
- To assess our students' Digital, Oral and Written literacy and to set attainable targets for improvement
- Compare our DATS to our Mid-Year exam results to see if students on target to achieve their potential
- Stratford College Book: Each student must submit their best work (graded by a teacher) to their form tutor by Wednesday 13th February. This cannot be longer than an A4 page. Form tutors will receive a hard copy, the electronic copy must be submitted to Ms O'Kelly at hokelly@stratfordcollege.ie This written work can be from any subject not just English?
- Communicate the important role of parents in the promotion of literacy.



In consultation with Staff, Parents Association & Student Council

Approved by Board of Management :

Chair of the BOM: Mr Cormac Murphy

Date: 20th May 2013.